

Public Law 102-122
102d Congress

Joint Resolution

Oct. 8, 1991
[S.J. Res. 156]

To designate the week of October 6, 1991, through October 12, 1991, as "Mental Illness Awareness Week".

Whereas mental illness is a problem of grave concern and consequence in the United States, widely but unnecessarily feared and misunderstood;

Whereas 31,000,000 to 41,000,000 United States citizens annually suffer from clearly diagnosable mental disorders involving significant disability with respect to employment, school attendance, and independent living;

Whereas more than 10,000,000 United States citizens are disabled for long periods of time by schizophrenia, manic depressive disorder, and major depression;

Whereas 33 percent of the homeless suffer serious, chronic forms of mental illness;

Whereas alcohol, drug, and mental disorders affect almost 19 percent of adults in this country in any 6-month period;

Whereas mental illness in at least 12,000,000 of our children interferes with vital developmental and maturational processes;

Whereas mental disorder related deaths are estimated to be, at the very least, 33,000 annually, with suicide accounting for at least 29,000 of such deaths;

Whereas our growing population of the elderly is particularly vulnerable to mental illness;

Whereas estimates indicate that 10 percent of AIDS patients will develop dementia or other psychiatric problems as the first sign of such disease, and that as many as two-thirds of AIDS patients will show neuropsychiatric symptoms before they die;

Whereas mental disorders result in staggering costs to society, estimated to be in excess of 249,000,000,000 dollars in direct treatment and support and indirect costs to society, including lost productivity;

Whereas the Federal research budget committed to the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration represents only about 1 percent of the direct clinical costs of caring for persons with alcohol, drug, and mental disorders;

Whereas mental illness is increasingly a treatable disability with excellent prospects for amelioration and recovery when properly recognized;

Whereas families of mentally ill persons and those persons themselves have begun to join selfhelp groups seeking to combat the unfair stigma of the diseases, to support greater national investment in research, and to advocate an adequate continuum of care from hospital to community;

Whereas in recent years there have been unprecedented major research developments bringing new methods and technology to the sophisticated and objective study of the functioning of the brain and its linkages to both normal and abnormal behavior;

Whereas research in recent decades has led to a wide array of new and more effective modalities of treatment (both somatic and psychosocial) for some of the most incapacitating forms of mental illness, including schizophrenia, major affective disorders, phobias, and phobic disorders;

Whereas appropriate treatment of mental illness has been demonstrated to be cost effective in terms of restored productivity, reduced use of other health services, and lessened social dependence; and

Whereas recent and unparalleled growth in scientific knowledge about mental illness has generated the current emergence of a new threshold of opportunity for future research advances and fruitful application to specific clinical problems: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the period of October 6, 1991, through October 12, 1991, is designated as "Mental Illness Awareness Week" and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

Approved October 8, 1991.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 156:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 137 (1991):

June 26, considered and passed Senate.

Sept. 30, considered and passed House.